



THEOLOGY DEPARTMENT

Theology Department Mission Statement

The Theology Department at Jesuit High School seeks to transform students through facilitating an encounter with the living Christ. Such an encounter ignites the soul and sets aflame a commitment to embody Christ to the world. We embark on this faith journey with students of all religious backgrounds and traditions, inviting all students to greater self-knowledge and discovery. Graduates will carry with them a seasoned relationship with the Catholic Church, thoughtfully acknowledging her wounds and celebrating her joys. It is our call to boldly proclaim an Ignatian dedication to faith that does justice while sustaining students' spirits through prayer and reflection. With confidence, we, the Theology Department, will teach passionately as Christ taught so that our students may be recognized as companions of Jesus, courageously encountering the world through the love of the Gospel and the hope of the resurrection.

Curriculum

All students take eight semesters of Theology. The first two years all students take the same two courses (Faith Formation and Hebrew/Christian Scriptures). They then choose from a program of semester electives during their last two years. This program of electives is offered on an A & B cycle, one set of courses offered one year and the next set offered the next year.

Jesuit offers the following courses:

Faith Formation (Freshman Year) - This course will orient the freshman student to one of the most vital parts of the Profile of the Jesuit High School Graduate at Graduation: "Religious" (SH 1.2). The course will invite students to experience a wide range of religious expression while developing knowledge through study and spiritual practice. This class is grounded in encountering Christ through our community and learning. Specifically, this year long course will introduce the student to the study of Theology, the Catholic Mass, Stages of Faith, World Religions, Hebrew Scripture, Christian Scripture, the person of Jesus, Ethics, Sacraments and Ignatian (Jesuit) Spirituality.

Hebrew/Christian Scriptures (Sophomore Year) - This course introduces the student to a survey of the Bible, focusing on major themes and people of the Hebrew/Christian Scriptures, with special emphasis given to Jesus' birth, ministry, passion, death, and resurrection. This course will teach students to encounter

the Bible from various perspectives: historical, cultural, theological, and personal. In doing so, it will provide a basic understanding of practical, foundational uses of the Bible. It will encourage in students a reverent appreciation of Scripture as the source of the great heroic stories, wisdom, and revelation of the Judeo-Christian tradition. It will also seek to develop an awareness of the integral connection and common messages of the two testaments. Finally, it will help students apply Scripture to their daily lives.

Peace & Justice (required for all students at some point junior or senior year; offered every semester). This course is designed to help students consider the unjust as well as the life-giving aspects of modern culture and social structures in light of the student's service experience and Catholic social teachings. After an overview of scriptural and theological justice principles, students will be guided through an educational process of context, social analysis, theological reflection, and pastoral action. These tools will then be applied to such issues as poverty, sexism, racism, homelessness, just-war theory, pacifism, the environment, and other issues of human rights. Jesus Christ's call to reform the injustices of society in fulfillment of the Reign of God as expressed in scriptures and the social teachings of the Catholic church will be the focus. Peace & Justice seeks to broaden student awareness of their responsibility to create a just world of peace & compassion.

Comparative Religions — Comparative Religions involves the study of major world religions, examining key beliefs, practices, festivals, and historical developments of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and the religions of China. Christianity provides the starting point for the comparison of these religions to both it and to each other.

Cycle A electives (offered to juniors & seniors)

Christian Ethics—This introduces students to ethics from a traditional as well as contemporary Catholic perspective. Its premise resides in the underlying principle that as human beings we are not only free to shape ourselves and our world, but we are also responsible to do so in a virtuous way. This approach has come to be known as virtue ethics. Any study of ethics, however, is merely a philosophical exercise until it is applied in moral action. Mediated through the Ignatian tradition, Scriptural teachings, Catholic Social Teachings, and lived examples, students are invited to learn methods of discernment and to wrestle with the implications of Jesus' message in the areas of personal, societal, and career/vocational issues. The overriding goal of this course is for students to grow in ethical decision-making and moral action.

Christian Relationships—The purpose here is to allow the students to explore the dynamics of healthy relationships in the context of the gospel message to love God, neighbor, and self. It is the hope that each student will understand that the development of healthy, life-giving friendships is the principle and foundation of a meaningful human life. The course is designed to strengthen the student's awareness and skills necessary for the development of these relationships.

Sacraments & Prayer—This class is designed to give students an opportunity to explore their personal prayer lives as well as the Sacramental Nature of the Catholic Faith. The course examines and offers opportunities to practice various prayer methods, while also examining the rich history & theology of the Seven Sacraments along with other religious rituals. It gives students a very clear understanding of Catholic Sacraments, Spirituality, and Prayer. Students who take

this course need to be open to the practice of prayer in their personal lives as well as communally with others in ritual.

Cycle B electives (offered to juniors & seniors)

Problems of Faith—This course tackles many of the basic existential problems adults struggle with in their faith lives, especially regarding religious or spiritual faith: What is faith and how do I know if I have it? Do I have faith experiences that are not religious or spiritual? Can I know if God exists? Does God communicate with the world and with me individually? Why is there evil and suffering in the world? What happens to me after I die?

Catholicism & Contemporary Culture—This course seeks to understand the distinctiveness of Catholic identity amidst contemporary cultural tensions. Students will study and consider intelligent, reasoned theological principles as tools to address the realities of our contemporary culture, especially as they are portrayed in movies, music, and literature, as well as current events. Ultimately, it seeks to define a Catholic identity within our contemporary culture, and articulate why that identity is an option people see as a choice worth living today.

Prophetic Voices— This course deepens students' understanding of biblical, historical and current prophets as messengers of God. Prophetic voices called and continue to call people into God's Kingdom of justice on behalf of those who are marginalized in society. The prophets were and are deeply rooted in their faith and personal integrity, standing firm in the face of opposition on behalf of the status quo. This course also examines where in our modern world we need the prophetic voice.

Faculty Members

The Jesuit High School Theology Department consists of 12 teachers, having an average of 12 years of teaching experience. Most members of the department also hold advanced degrees. Two are members of the Society of Jesus religious order (aka, "Jesuits").

For more information, please contact:

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